CLAIMS

1. A method of treating insomnia comprising administering a therapeutic amount of a sedative hypnotic drug condensation aerosol, having an MMAD less than 3 μm and less than 5% sedative hypnotic drug degradation products, to a patient by inhalation, upon activation by the patient of the formation of, and delivery of, the condensation aerosol.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said condensation aerosol is formed by

a. volatilizing an sedative hypnotic drug under conditions effective to produce a heated vapor of the sedative hypnotic drug; and

b. condensing the heated vapor of the sedative hypnotic drug to form condensation aerosol particles.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein said administration results in a peak plasma concentration of said sedative hypnotic drug in less than 0.1 hours.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the sedative hypnotic drug is selected from the group consisting of zaleplon, zolpidem, or zopiclone.

5. The method according to claim 3, wherein the administered aerosol is formed at a rate greater than 0.5 mg/second.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein at least 50% by weight of the condensation aerosol is amorphous in form.

7. A method of treating insomnia comprising administering a therapeutic amount of a zaleplon, zolpidem, or zopiclone condensation aerosol, having an MMAD less than 3 μm and less than 5% zaleplon, zolpidem, or zopiclone degradation products, to a patient by inhalation, upon activation by the patient of the formation of, and delivery of, the condensation aerosol.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said condensation aerosol is formed by

a. volatilizing zaleplon, zolpidem, or zopiclone under conditions effective to produce a heated vapor of zaleplon, zolpidem, or zopiclone; and

b. condensing the heated vapor of zaleplon, zolpidem, or zopiclone to form condensation aerosol particles.

9. The method according to claim 7, wherein said administration results in a peak plasma concentration of zaleplon, zolpidem, or zopiclone in less than 0.1 hours.

10. The method according to claim 7, wherein at least 50% by weight of the condensation aerosol is amorphous in form.

11. A method of administering a sedative hypnotic drug to a patient to achieve a peak plasma drug concentration rapidly, comprising administering to the patient by inhalation an aerosol of a sedative hypnotic drug having less than 5% sedative hypnotic drug degradation products and an MMAD less than 3 microns wherein the peak plasma concentration of the sedative hypnotic drug is achieved in less than 0.1 hours.

12. A method of administering zaleplon, zolpidem, or zopiclone to a patient to achieve a peak plasma drug concentration rapidly, comprising administering to the patient by inhalation an aerosol of zaleplon, zolpidem, or zopiclone having less than 5% zaleplon, zolpidem, or zopiclone degradation products and an MMAD less than 3 microns wherein the peak plasma drug concentration of zaleplon, zolpidem, or zopiclone is achieved in less than 0.1 hours.

13. A kit for delivering a drug aerosol comprising:

a) a thin coating of an sedative hypnotic drug composition and

b) a device for dispensing said thin coating as a condensation aerosol.

14. The kit of claim 13, wherein the sedative hypnotic drug in the composition is selected from the group consisting zaleplon, zolpidem, or zopiclone.

15. The kit of claim 13, wherein the device for dispensing said coating of a sedative hypnotic drug composition as an aerosol comprises

(a) a flow through enclosure,

(b) contained within the enclosure, a metal substrate with a foil-like surface and having a thin coating of an sedative hypnotic drug composition formed on the substrate surface,

(c) a power source that can be activated to heat the substrate to a temperature effective to volatilize the sedative hypnotic drug composition contained in said coating, and

(d) inlet and exit portals through which air can be drawn through said device by inhalation,

wherein heating the substrate by activation of the power source is effective to form a sedative hypnotic drug vapor containing less than 5% sedative hypnotic drug degradation products, and drawing air through said chamber is effective to condense the sedative hypnotic drug vapor to form aerosol particles wherein the aerosol has an MMAD of less than 3 microns.

16. The kit according to claim 15, wherein the heat for heating the substrate is generated by an exothermic chemical reaction.

17. The kit according to claim 16, wherein said exothermic chemical reaction is oxidation of combustible materials.

18. The kit according to claim 15, wherein the heat for heating the substrate is generated by passage of current through an electrical resistance element.

19. The kit according to Claim 15, wherein said substrate has a surface area dimensioned to accommodate a therapeutic dose of a sedative hypnotic drug composition in said coating.

20. The kit according to claim 13, wherein a peak plasma concentration of sedative hypnotic drug is obtained in less than 0.1 hours after delivery of the condensation aerosol to the pulmonary system.

21. The kit of claim 13, further including instructions for use.